

Archbishop Ieronymos' statement regarding prospective malicious blasphemy of religion provision in Greece's penal code



The issue of a reintroduction of a provision in Greece's penal code against malicious blasphemy of religion generated increased scrutiny in the country over the past 24 hours, with the relevant justice minister detailing the revision in a draft bill, which is currently up for debate at the Parliament committee level. Nevertheless, on Tuesday morning the minister backed away from the proposed reinstitution of the offense – during comments to a radio news program.

In a high-profile statement today regarding proposed revisions to the penal code that deal with religion and religious faith, the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, underlined that

“...a reintroduction of provisions in the penal code regarding the offenses of malicious blasphemy and insult of religions, does not, obviously, aim to protect God, the Divine, the Orthodox Church or any other religion, as they have no need for human protection; it aims, however, to safeguard the religious sentiment of the faithful and (society's) best interests, particularly in these troubles times for social peace and cohesion... these values cannot be trampled upon in the name of a 'libertarian' logic of freedom of speech...but one that includes insults, hate and

fanaticism.”